

Northamptonshire Notes & Queries and its first editors v01
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by Francis Howcutt



Rev Walter Debenham Sweeting



Introduction

This article concerns the First series of *Northamptonshire Notes & Queries*. It does not explore the Second series, whose journals were issued in the early 20th century. Thank you to Michael Loveder for the picture of Rev W D Sweeting¹ and to Graham Ward for the one of John Taylor.²

Internet links cited were checked on the date of this Introduction. If you find any that no longer work or have been changed for the worse, you may be able to find the material that the link once led to by using the Wayback Machine.³

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11 September 2024

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The First series of *Northamptonshire Notes & Queries* was launched as a quarterly journal in January 1884 and continued to be published until 1896. Each issue contains an assortment of articles, ranging from transcripts of original historical documents to pleas for information about particular topics. In that respect, it was a genteel Victorian forerunner of the current history and nostalgia orientated groups now found on social media. Illustrations accompany some of the articles. The journals include advertisements which themselves add to our knowledge of the era when they first appeared.



Northamptonshire Notes & Queries was printed by The Dryden Press of 9 College Street, Northampton - a business operated by John Taylor, the prolific historical researcher and author who is pictured to the left. The journal's mission was heralded as '*devoted to The Antiquities, Family History, Traditions, Parochial Records, Folk-lore, Quaint Customs, etc. of the County*'. This may suggest an antiquarian bias, but as well as some fairly trivial items there is a large stock of weightier historical resources and also contributions that rest on the first-hand knowledge of individuals who are no longer with us. For instance, the building of Little Addington parish church was updated in 1883 but without this detail which was published in *Notes & Queries* it is unlikely we would know that '*several sepulchral slabs with Sanderson (or Saunderson) epitaphs lie buried with their faces down, under the new encaustic tiling of the sanctuary of Little Addington chapel*'.⁴

¹ Information about the history of Maxey can be found on the website of St Peter's Maxey.

<https://www.maxeychurch.co.uk/>

² *Northamptonshire Notes & Queries*, 2nd series, volume 2, page 14.

³ <https://web.archive.org/>

⁴ *Northamptonshire Notes & Queries*, 1st series, volume 1, page 141.

Printed copies of the periodical are not widely available, so it is very helpful that six bound volumes - which contain a total of 902 articles spread over more than 1500 pages - have been digitised. These can be downloaded in PDF and other formats free of charge from the Internet Archive site by following the links listed below. Not every single image is fully in focus but for volumes 3, 5 and 6 any scanning defect found may be overcome by checking the alternative scan of the same book. Despite the occasional shortcomings of the digitised versions, their ready availability anywhere at any time is a major bonus for the vast majority of us who lack easy access to a suitable specialist library.

- Vol. 1 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir04unkngoog/page/n7/mode/2up>
Vol. 2 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir00markgoog/page/n7/mode/2up>
Vol. 3 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir01unkngoog/page/n11/mode/2up>
Vol. 3 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir05unkngoog/page/n5/mode/2up>
Vol. 4 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir03unkngoog/page/n10/mode/2up>
Vol. 5 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir02markgoog/page/n7/mode/2up>
Vol. 5 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir02unkngoog/page/n11/mode/2up>
Vol. 6 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir00unkngoog/page/n9/mode/2up>
Vol. 6 = <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshir01markgoog/page/n5/mode/2up>

These three individuals served as editors:

- **Rev Walter Debenham Sweeting** (1839-1913). A graduate of Trinity College Cambridge, he was appointed Second Master of Peterborough Cathedral School in 1861. His promotion to be its Head Master took place in 1875. Sweeting was instituted as vicar of Maxey in 1881 and was there when he edited volumes 1 and 2.⁵ In 1901, he swapped livings with Rev Henry Selby Hele⁶ and became vicar of Holy Trinity, Rotherhithe, a position from which he retired in 1905. His portrait appears on the first page of this article.
- **John Taylor** (1831-1901). A bookseller and printer, he was born and lived for most of his life at Northampton. He was the editor of volumes 3 and 5 and inspired a detailed obituary published in *Northampton Mercury*.⁷ A more easily accessible account of his life and work can be seen on the *Miscellanea Edintone* site.⁸ His portrait can be seen on page 2 above.
- **Christopher Alexander Markham** (1859-1937) A solicitor, he was secretary of the Architectural Society of the Archdeaconry of Northampton and Oakham when he edited volumes 4 and 6. It was reported that he died at his home at Flore and had served during the War in the Northamptonshire Regiment with the rank of Major.⁹ A poor-quality picture of him created in 1886 can be seen online.¹⁰

Details of some of the many other works written by each of the editors can be found on the *Signposts* page of the *Northamptonshire Record Society* website.¹¹

⁵ *Northamptonshire & Rutland Clergy* by Henry Isham Longden volume XIII [13], page 131.

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS8J-QWMT-Z>

⁶ <https://www.maxeychurch.co.uk/vicars.htm>

⁷ *Northampton Mercury* 30 August 1901, page 6, column 3.

⁸ *John Taylor of Northampton (1831-1901) "A Victorian Blogger"* by Graham Ward.

<https://edintone.com/johntaylor/>

⁹ *Peterborough Standard* 24 September 1937, page 1, column 4.

¹⁰ <https://archive.org/details/northamptonshirerutlandmilitia1924/page/n13/mode/2up>

¹¹ <https://www.northamptonshirerecordsociety.org.uk/signposts>